

Approved Meeting Minutes

Middle School Building Committee Meeting

January 13, 2014 – 8:15 a.m.

BOE Conference Room, 3rd Floor Annex Building

5 Linsley Street, North Haven, CT

Committee Members in Attendance:

Goldie Adele, Michael Brandt, , Miriam Brody , Lou Coppola, Sr., Gary Johns (committee chairman), David Mikos, Bruce Morris, Walter Nester, Jr., Joseph Porto, Michelle Spader (committee secretary), Dyann Vissicchio (committee vice-chair)

Absent: None

Others in Attendance:

Jeffrey Donofrio , Phil Diana, Edward Swinkoski, Diversified Technology Consultants (DTC); Shay Atluru, Rick Morse, Perkins Eastman; Joe Costa, Phil Piazza, Dr. Robert Cronin, and Kristine Carling

Meeting called to order at 8:15 am by chairman, Gary Johns.

Motion to approve the minutes of December 16, 2013 meeting: Moved by Bruce Morris and seconded by Joseph Porto.

The purpose of today's meeting is for the committee to discuss the presentation for the upcoming town meeting on Tuesday, January 28, 2014 at 7 pm in the middle school auditorium. Johns explained to the rest of the committee that he, Vissicchio and Spader had met to put together a preliminary list of topics for inclusion in the presentation and Vissicchio prepared a slide deck for committee review.

Johns made sure the committee was aware that this was a working session and we are looking for feedback from the committee on things they would like to see added, omitted or changed in the presentation.

The first slides will be presented by the chairman, Gary Johns, and they refer to the current status of the existing middle school and there will be an explanation of where residents can find the NEASC report, which is located on the middle school website. The report suggests improvements/updates to the middle school. Mr. Piazza suggested a page with the recommendations. Rick Morse mentioned that the report concludes that the conditions in the facility are limiting the academic program. So while the report doesn't suggest the remedy it definitely points to the problems.

There is also a slide discussing the formation of the committee and one naming the members of the full committee. Johns requested that a bullet be added stating that the town hired DTC to do a study of the facility prior to the committee being formed.

DTC and Perkins Eastman will do the presentation on each of the options that were originally presented to the committee. We would like the updated cost estimates added to these slides.

Then, slides showing the thought process behind elimination of the various options in the order that they were eliminated will be shown. (Gateway, Renovate as New existing, and Construct New on Bailey Rd). We will add to the Gateway elimination slide that the state of CT has not even deemed the property as surplus, therefore we have no idea if or when they would even decide to sell the property.

For the slide(s) that pertain to renovation of the existing structure (Renovate as New) we discussed that it is the riskiest of all the options with the most disruption to the learning process and increased risk of exposure to airborne materials. This is also the option with the longest time frame.

There was a general discussion about remediation work and whether that could be done when school was in session. Michelle Spader shared with the committee a recent roadblock that the Wethersfield High School renovation project experienced when asbestos was found in their gymnasium. Since we have a renovation component to the option we chose, Spader felt it was important to make the committee aware that this is a reality we could also be faced with in our project.

The committee moved on to discuss the elimination of the 'New School' option. Shay Atluru added that a new report came out from the state legislature suggesting that the setback distance for the new school along Bailey road is not optimal from a security standpoint. The option we chose is better in regards to security, since it has a larger setback from the road.

Then, the discussion moved onto the option the committee selected to bring to the public. Additions to the slide include the fact that there is less disruption as well as less need for swing space with this option since the children will still be attending classes in the regular classrooms while construction of a new academic wing is occurring on another portion of the campus. When the new academic wing is completed the students would swing to the new space and the existing classroom halls would be demolished. It was also reiterated that a lot of the work to the common areas could be scheduled to occur in the summer months over the years of the project. Johns thought it was important to include this fact. Spader agreed and stated that the question had been asked by a board of education member at a recent meeting, therefore it is a topic we should provide further elaboration on.

Next there is a slide that deals with the current state reimbursements. Spader asked if we are free to say that we will pursue getting reimbursement for our entire project at the higher "Renovate as New" rate. There are no guarantees it will be granted. However, there are several CT towns who have had a new component to their construction projects in addition to the renovation piece and the state has granted them the higher rate for the entire project. Costa and Atluru thought it would be a good idea to mention this fact to the residents and Costa said he could site historical precedent of Connecticut

towns that have been successful with being granted the higher reimbursement rate for their entire project (one example is Meriden).

Next the board discussed the slide showing the projected schedule of next steps. Mr. Piazza has a report that is due on February 1, which requires him to have an updated time line for the middle school project.

We will be inserting a video and/or photographs of the areas of concern into the presentation. Mr. Piazza met with Justin Falcon, from the high school, to take some preliminary photos and some additional video that will be inserted along with some voice overs to describe what is being shown. Vissicchio thought that the firehouse videos were very impactful, which is why she thought it would be useful to add into our presentation because until you actually see the conditions for yourself, you really have no idea how bad the conditions are. Spader does not feel the video presentation needs to be lengthy, but agrees that it is definitely important, especially for those residents who have not been inside the school in many years. This video will be able to reach a wide audience since those who cannot be in attendance at the meeting or to take a school tour, will be able to see the conditions via the taping of the town meeting by NHTV. Johns asked if we could open the school up at 6 pm for tours prior to the town meeting and Piazza agreed. Dr. Cronin agreed that guided tours would be best to point out specific areas of concern throughout the building.

Miriam Brody wanted to confirm that this is still a concept because she said some people believe that we have the whole building designed. It will be important to ensure that we include a talking point that addresses this.

It was suggested by Michelle Spader, that Dyann Vissicchio, as committee vice-chair present the eliminated options. Mr. Piazza agreed that Vissicchio would be a good choice and the committee members were in agreement as well.

David Mikos brought up the inclusion of details on renovations to fields, track, etc and wanted to know if some of that should be included in the town meeting presentation on January 28. Johns said that will be something we can include in future meetings, but right now we are trying to promote the hybrid concept. Brandt asked if going forward residents would be encouraged to provide their input on the music room, fields, auditorium, etc. and Johns said the committee would welcome suggestions. Some of these additional components should be decided upon before the referendum.

Vissicchio stated that until the residents approve this concept, we cannot really design anything therefore it would be hard to say exactly what field/type of field we would be able to add. Our slides do state that we eliminated an option which would have caused us to lose the use of field(s) for a couple years due to construction and the option we chose has the potential to add a field.

Brandt commented that he appreciated the work that Vissicchio, Spader and Johns put into the draft of the presentation, as he thought today's meeting was going to be creating the presentation from scratch.

With no further comments from the committee the meeting was adjourned. Motion to adjourn at 9:12 am by Joseph Porto . Seconded by Michael Brandt.

Respectfully submitted,

Michelle Spader, Committee Secretary